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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: ~~Tom Watkins~~ *Tom Watkins*
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SUBJECT: Discussion Regarding the 2005-2006 Michigan Educational Assessment Program
Assessment Designs

As many of you are aware, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation calls for annual assessment of each state's curriculum standards and benchmarks in the areas of mathematics and English Language Arts for grades 3 through 8 beginning in 2005-2006. In preparation, grade level content, referred to as Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs), has been specified for these two subject areas.

The design of the MEAP assessments that are being implemented in fall 2005 are being changed to reflect the adoption of the GLCEs and ongoing content review in the areas of social studies and science. This design also addresses the need to release all assessment items that are used to report individual student results to parents and educators immediately following each assessment cycle.

**Proposed MEAP Assessment Designs
2005-2006**

Mathematics

The major changes in Mathematics include the development of Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) for each grade in the elementary and middle school levels. In the past, MEAP tested a range of benchmarks that had been taught over a span of 2 or more grade levels. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, MEAP assessments will assess the GLCEs of the previous grade. For example, the Grade 4 MEAP will assess the Grade 3 GLCEs.

When the State developed the GLCEs, significant grade placement changes were made in the content covered by some of the GLCEs. Because students have not yet been instructed in these areas, these "future core" GLCEs will be measured on a matrix-sampling basis and reported at the school and district levels only. They will not be included in the part of the student, school or district results for which schools are held accountable, but will be eligible for inclusion in the Core test five years in the future.

The remaining GLCEs will be divided into two groups. The majority comprise a Core set on which every student will be assessed annually, reported at the student, school, and district

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levels, and used for school and district accountability purposes. The remaining GLCEs will be assessed on a matrix-sampling basis and reported only at the school and district levels for curriculum planning purposes.

The Core Mathematics items will be released electronically each year. New items will be embedded within the operational assessments for building future assessments. The following chart compares the lengths of the current and planned assessments:

| Mathematics | Number of GLCEs* | Current Test Length | New Test Length | Testing Time (Minutes) |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Grade 3 | 20 | None | 75 | 90 |
| Grade 4 | 24 | 49 | 90 | 105 |
| Grade 5 | 24 | None | 90 | 105 |
| Grade 6 | 24 | None | 90 | 105 |
| Grade 7 | 24 | None | 91 | 105 |
| Grade 8 | 19 | 53 | 72 | 90 |

* This is the number of GLCEs included in the assessments; there are others which are not measurable on a large-scale assessment.

English Language Arts

The major changes proposed in the English Language Arts (ELA) assessments include dropping the thematic connections across all components of each ELA assessment, adding a second, shorter prompt to the Writing component and structuring the writing prompts so that students spend less time completing them. Multiple-choice items measuring the structural components of writing will also be included. Students will be asked to read independent informational and narrative texts, as well as a pair of texts for assessing cross-text skills. The ELA assessments are based on the comprehensive set of GLCEs approved by the State Board, although the actual GLCEs assessed in each strand of a given assessment will depend on the passages used in the Reading component. The following chart shows the number of items in the current and planned assessments:

| ELA/Reading and Writing | Number of GLCEs* | Current Test Length/Items | New Test Length/Items | Testing Time (Min) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grade 3 | 27 | None | 62-76 | 90 |
| Grade 4 | 27 | 35 | 62-76 | 90 |
| Grade 5 | 27 | None | 62-76 | 90 |
| Grade 6 | 27 | None | 62-76 | 90 |
| Grade 7 | 27 | 35 | 62-76 | 90 |
| Grade 8 | 27 | None | 62-76 | 90 |

*Number of GLCEs assessed will vary, depending on the passages used each year.

Science

The current Science assessments are not scheduled to change in 2005-2006. Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, however, the Science tests will be administered in the Fall.

Grade-span Content Expectations are being developed which are based on current curriculum standards and benchmarks. They will result in new test designs being created, new item development activities planned for 2005-2006, and new Science assessments implemented in 2006-2007. These assessments will include a Core test, with matrix-sampling used for

additional, less important content expectations. In the future, the Core items will be released annually, so new items will be embedded within each operational assessment for building future assessments.

| Science | Number of Benchmarks | Current Test Length | New Test Length* | Testing Time (Min) |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Grade 5 | 53 | 51 | 98 | 120 |
| Grade 8 | 65 | 58 | 98 | 120 |

*The test length may change when the new Content Expectations, which are based on the current benchmarks and curriculum standards and are not grade-level-specific, are created.

Social Studies

The current Social Studies assessments are also not scheduled to change in 2005-2006. Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, however, the Social Studies tests will be administered in the fall. The Social Studies Task Force has suggested a reduction in the breadth of the assessment prior to 2006-2007.

GLCEs are being developed based on the current curriculum standards and benchmarks, which will result in new test designs being created, new item development activities planned for 2005-2006, and new Social Studies assessments implemented in 2006-2007. These assessments will include a Core test, with matrix-sampling used for additional, less important GLCEs. In the future, the Core items will be released annually, so new items will be embedded within each operational assessment for building future assessments.

| Social Studies | Number of Benchmarks | Current Test Length | New Test Length* | Testing Time (Min) |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Grade 6 | 74 | 47 | 75 | 90 |
| Grade 9 | 79 | 47 | 75 | 90 |

*The test length may change when the assessable GLCEs are identified.

Q & A About the New Assessments

Why are the new assessments longer than the current MEAP assessments?

NCLB requires that the Department report on each GLCE or benchmark so MEAP can no longer only assess a small sample of GLCEs/benchmarks.

Measuring GLCEs with multiple items provides more reliable results.

Educators have requested that we release all items that are used to score students.

Legislation requires item analyses be provided, which is only useful when paired with release of actual items. Therefore, we need to pilot test enough items to replace those released.

Free-standing pilot testing is inferior to embedded pilot testing, which may result in poor quality items on operational tests.

Free-standing pilot tests demand too much added testing time from the sample of schools and they are less reliable than embedded pilots. MEAP has had to re-pilot using the free-standing method when schools could not fulfill their obligation for pilot testing.

How do the new test designs reduce the amount of time required for testing?

Each student is assessed on the same core items, but only a fraction of the pilot test items.

Constructed-response items require a less lengthy response.

Reasonable testing time limits will be used.

Test item language will be simplified.

Test items will be more clearly targeted to the GLCE or benchmark.

Passages will be limited in length.

Tests will be administered in parts to help students with shorter attention spans.

In 1991, MEAP had 3-item measures for 28 objectives (core) and 3-item measures for 8 additional correlate skills. The tests had 108 items (in math) and took two hours. MEAP is estimating that the proposed tests will take two or three class periods of 45-50 minutes each.